MANAGING KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND SHARING WITHIN INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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Abstract

The literature review postulates the significance of knowledge transfer and sharing in the intra-organizational framework. The study operationalized Knowledge transfer, sharing and conjoint usage of knowledge exchange. Participation, contribution and attitude of managerial and non-managerial employees has shown discrepancies. Human traits, ownership of knowledge, insecurity of losing possession and position, distribution of knowledge, knowledge equality and biasness are most common hurdles of knowledge transfer. The paper theoretically examines previous researches and systematically carry out comprehensive literature analysis. The assessment of scientific theories are taken into consideration for developing the construct of paper. The selection of recognized academic references from various databases and journals have been evaluated methodologically. The analysis of scientific discussions and contribution from renowned authors have been used to finalize the concepts of literature review. The Integration of intra-organizational knowledge transfer, sharing and exchange balances the paper.

Keywords: Intra-organizational, knowledge, transfer, sharing, exchange.

Introduction

Knowledge transfer and sharing in intra-organizational platforms are perceived differently. Managing knowledge transfer and sharing is a combination of art and science. Business management recognize knowledge gained is a result of the process of converting individual

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knowledge into organizational knowledge. For individual employee's knowledge gained is an added advantage for their professional career development. This practice allows both the identities to achieve personal motives. The transition and transfer take it's time and commonly referred as accumulation of knowledge converted into knowledge stock (Tang, 2011).

In intra-organizational set-up the business administration align long term objectives as a part of constant learning, sharing and transferring technical skills. The creation of support system is a priority to facilitate knowledge transfer from experienced employees and leaders. The accumulated knowledge is then further disseminated or shared with young and unexperienced employees (Tsai and Ghosal, 1998).

The distinctiveness of knowledge transfer and sharing from experienced to amateurs have produced challenges and opportunities during interaction. More often than less the flow of knowledge is from experienced employees to unexperienced employees. The differences between both the parties has its own drawbacks followed by reciprocity during specified time limits, willingness to learn and adaptation of the knowledge gained within organizations internal systems (Ghoshal *et al.,* 1994).

The process of knowledge transfer and sharing are bound to have similar constraints. The absorptive capacity of receiver is questionable; however, the knowledge dissemination capacity of knowledge sender remains underexplored. The interpretation and communication of knowledge from sender to receiver have significant implications (Tsai, 2002). There is a lack of systematic review in intra-organizational context which aims to test the concept of how knowledge transfer and sharing is being managed within organizational boundaries lately. Based on prior research knowledge transfer and sharing have shown discrepancies. The emphasis of literature review is on recognized organizational dimensions, communications, interactions and interrelationship developed between subordinates for knowledge exchange.

Research Methodology

Knowledge transfer and sharing are integral part of intra-organizations knowledge management. To establishing the ground theories for research systematic approach and effective methodology have been used. For the purpose comprehensive literature review has been conducted, many publications have been explored through scrutinizing recognized scientific journals (Table 1). The search criteria include the use of key terminologies taken from research title and specific term have been used to examine literatures available on knowledge transfer and sharing.

Table 1. Methodology of selected articles

Terminology	Google Scholar	Emerald Insight	EBSCO	Science Direct
Managing knowledge transfer and sharing.	21	18	8	15
Knowledge transfer and sharing within intra-organizational boundaries.	19	11	12	17
Impact of knowledge transfer and sharing in intra-organizational setup.	23	16	14	13
Importance of knowledge sharing and transfer in organizations.	25	13	18	19

There are many critical factors have been considered for the purpose of selecting the relevant article (Table 2).

Table 2. Selection of reviewed articles

Abstract Reading/ Full revision of Article	Literature Review/ Research Methodology	Conceptual Framework	Quantitative Analysis/ Qualitative Analysis	Implication/ Limitation	Future research
28/42	27/38	22	37/33	45/57	62

The total number of articles collected for literature review are presented in (Table 3).

Table 3. Collection of reviewed articles

Literature Review	Case Study	Survey	Interview	Modelling	Stat. Ana.	Test/ Exp.	Tool/ Concept
29	14	12	15	10	18	24	9

Scientific Discussions

Managing knowledge exchange within organizational boundaries requires synchronization and collaboration between intra-organization identities. Functional and operational strategies, individual intricacies, human psychological traits have major implications on transfer and sharing. For developing the competitive environment sharing and transfer needs integration in intra-organizational setup. The coordination from top to bottom organizational structure have shown significant influence on intra-organizational knowledge transfer. Similarly formal and informal knowledge sharing has its own intrinsic value.

Knowledge Transfer

In general, the flow of knowledge in organizational structure is from top to bottom.

The process starts from experienced employees working as a mentor for less experienced employees. In intra-organizational networks the practice of knowledge transfer is highly diligent and strenuous. In general team leader and managers act as a moderator for managing knowledge exchange. The paradox of transfer is depending on individual capabilities of understanding, disseminating and absorption of knowledge.

The actors, sender and receiver, are engaging in more psychological advantage. In other words, sender establishes sense of superiority and receiver demonstrate potential gain in skills development. The knowledge creation within organizational boundaries have an effect on developing comprehensive knowledge-database (Nickerson and Zenger, 2004). Both sender and receiver have mutual benefits and the outcome of transfer befits organizational motives.

The overall impact of knowledge transfer is entirely depending on recipients' capacity to take in and the questionable ability of knowledge holder to transfer. In terms of efficiency and effectiveness both sender and receiver have a major role to play. Knowledge can be distorted during transfer. It is a partnership and collaborative effort between them (Baldwin, 1959). Both the sides perspective must match and be understood clearly to avoid miscommunication and disfunction (Reagan and McEvily, 2003). Other primary requirements for knowledge transfer are skills, language efficiency, level of understanding and competency (Cabrera, 2003). For sender it is pertinent to have appropriate ability for knowledge diffusion in exact terms for avoiding misinterpretation, and unacceptable disruptions. Behavior and job qualification of sender for knowledge dissemination is considered as yet another pertinent determinant (Minbaeva and Michailova, 2004). For receiver it is important to have appropriate abilities for knowledge absorption, identification, acceptance and application (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990).

For facilitating knowledge transfer the employees, members or colleagues are highly dependent on close network ties and bonding. Equality and the level of acceptance are other important variables that leads to effective knowledge transfer (Nonaka, 1994). Constant interaction and sense of belongingness strengthen the relationship for knowledge transfer, exchange engagements (Grant, 1996). However, research have contradicted communication and interaction alone are not the necessary requirements for knowledge transfer.

Similarly, there are significant barriers restricting knowledge transfer. Behavioral perspective and identification of right candidate or potential

successor of carrying knowledge forwards is a major hurdle (Szulanki, 1996). Participation qualities and inequalities has shown major procrastination in knowledge transfer (Bales, 1950). Feeling of insecurity and possession of knowledge to give away, tendency to safe guard the self-interest and dispersion of very selective knowledge, preference and choice of designated employees, undermining the quality and quantity of knowledge to be transferred are some of major reasons that negatively affects knowledge transfer (Bales and Slater, 1955).

On the other hand, apart from human traits business administration remains in quest to identify the potential of developing the knowledge indigenously within organization has its own distinct advantages. The researchers mentioned by acquiring home grown capabilities it enables organizations to focus only on absorption rather than acquisition of knowledge, saving cost, time and application (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). In the process not only knowledge would be absorbed by intra-organizational networks but also it establishes the foundation for continuous knowledge development.

Managing knowledge transfer in Intra-organizational setup the participation is dominated by hierarchical networks instead of random selection (Berzonsky and Kuk, 2000; Kilduff, 1990; Krackhardt, 1990). Hierarchical networks has its own protocols regarding communication codes, information channels, promotion and coordination for facilitating knowledge transfer (Grant, 1996; Kogut and Zander, 1996).

However, researchers have highlighted consequences affecting knowledge exchange in relation to intra-organizational behavior, individual ambiguity, group complexity, characteristics and dynamic adaptation possesses non-linear effect on knowledge transfer (Carley, 1999). Subsequently intra-organizational relationship, close ties between employees, control and distribution of knowledge resources largely affects performance and pattern of knowledge transfer (Wrong, 1968; Bougon *et al.,* 1997). Individual self-selection and personal strategic motives hampers knowledge transfer in long run (Oliver and Marwell, 1988).

On the contrary, the presentation of knowledge that can be transferred requires codification and articulation. It is also expected that such knowledge can be formally and systematically expressed (Polanyi, 1996). Knowledge needs to be more teachable, observable and simple to understand just because the level of competency differs from person to person while disseminating at the same time (Winter, 1987). The forefront of knowledge transfer is depending on the speed at which it has been transferred. It has been observed in intra-organizational social ties and also the sources which have strong network links proliferate knowledge quickly and successfully (Albert *et al.,* 2000).

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing in dynamic organizational environment is considered as the capacity to acquire knowledge and process information into theoretical and technical skills for sustaining competitive advantage over rivals. Multinational corporations within intra-organizational boundaries execute rotational policies of employees worldwide. Knowledge is increasingly shared among geographical territories. With the practice in place, knowledge, ideas, skills set from one successful region is distributed to other underperforming business operations (Tsai and Ghosal, 1998). It provides an opportunity for mutual exchange, cooperation, dispersion and creation of new knowledge (Kogut and Zander, 1992).

In other terms knowledge sharing is referred as collective use of shared information to pursue common interests. The competition perspective of organizations tends to form alliance for mutual bilateral or trilateral knowledge sharing in order to outperform other competitive groups (Khanna *et al.* 1998). The purpose is to stay ahead from competitors and nullify imitation (Zander and Kogut, 1995). This trend is very common in airlines operating to similar destinations or using same air traffic routes.

Similarly, the alliance members learn from each other while competing in business and acquire knowledge within themselves or from close competitors (Hamel *et al.* 1989). Knowledge sharing in General Motors Corporation carries similar technological constraints as the manufacturing units are almost identical. Sharing knowledge among each other provides ideas of developing new car models or helps in resolving technical issues faced by other production units. Similar ideas, technological information are exchanged through knowledge sharing helps in scrutinizing and finalize future development plans (Gulati & Garguilo, 1999).

Knowledge sharing in intra-organizational boundaries is considered as coordinated effort, different units share their knowledge for improving organization's capability. This set of knowledge sharing within organization replaces contemporary knowledge exchange between organizations producing similar products and services (Grant, 1996; Madhok, 1996). In extent of knowledge sharing various departments integrate common efforts in systematizing knowledge sharing and streamline management functions. The advantage of such practice reduces imitation and duplication. It also fosters culture of sharing, cooperation, coordination and offering assistance for fulfilling organizational objectives (Spenders & Grant, 1996). Knowledge sharing is continuous process, the results and positive effects are seen in long run (Powell, 1990; Palmer and Richards, 1999). It enhances human psychological intricacies and opportunities for developing sustainable system that will impact inclusion of complex sources of different knowledge sets (Reagan and McEvily, 2003; Knott, 2003).

Various organizations approach knowledge sharing differently. Intra-organizational knowledge sharing varies from cooperation to coordination within organizational boundaries. The perspective is to increase knowledge flow and utilize knowledge database effectively by sharing vital information and technological knowhow.

Business administration and department executives within intra-organizational framework deliberately exercise organizational strategies for developing formal communication channels and mechanism for governing knowledge sharing (Burt, 1992). The objective behind formal interunit knowledge sharing is to realize the economies of scale and the strength of organization to work efficiently with its internal knowledge resources (Hill *et al.,* 1992). It accelerates technological progress and stimulate greater knowledge sharing for enabling continuous market expansion (Lado *et al.,* 1997).

In, informal intra-organizational knowledge sharing there are less restriction and conditions to follow protocols (Galbraith, 1973). Knowledge sharing in informal setup uses mode of internal social arrangements and very often occurs naturally. It persists horizontal communication and interactions between organizational units. Cross-unit knowledge sharing promotes lateral social integrative process within organization. It provides channels for information exchange increases knowledge access and resources to peers and organizational units (Homans, 1950).

Researches on informal intra-organizational knowledge sharing documented the importance of diffusing new ideas and new exchange and expansion of cooperative relationships (Ghoshal *et al.,* 1994). It creates an environment for developing new opportunities, exploration of current sources, and increases flow of knowledge sharing (Coleman, 1990). Informal intra-organizational knowledge sharing comprises of common synergetic benefits between the participants and sources, generation of trust, confidence in individual abilities and proliferates synchronization, association of team management activities (Tsai, 2002).

Conclusions

Knowledge transfer and sharing are bonded with constant networking and uninterrupted flow of information. Human interactions and absorption of knowledge have major impact on processing and decoding knowledge transfer and sharing. The human tendency and valuation of knowledge sharing, how much is it sufficient and to whom it is transferred remains incomparable and compromises the purpose of learning and knowledge exchange. The management layered structure and hierarchical dimensions have influenced the rate of knowledge transfer. The formal settings and social interactions have positive effect on knowledge exchange as compared

to formal settings and top to bottom management structure based on hierarchies. Both sender and receiver have experienced limitation and drawbacks in intra-organizational set-up. There are question being asked about receptive capabilities and disseminative capabilities of receiver and sender. Knowledge transfer and sharing in intra-organization framework is a double-loop process (Tang, 2011). The least discussed issues are managerial ability and influence of top business administration executives in knowledge transfer and sharing.

It has been argued that in intra-organizational settings the absorptive capabilities of company and individuals have shown discrepancies. In spite of that they are interdependent on each other, more so organization then individuals. Organizations absorptive capability is highly depending on individual absorptive capability. Individual absorptive capability have some repercussions on organization's knowledge transfer in consideration to the behavioral attitude (Lin *et al.,* 2005; Tang *et al.,* 2006).

It is quite evident that individuals share knowledge with their subordinates who are in close circle and strong relational ties. Although each individual has its own perception towards knowledge transfer and sharing. The individuals approach differs from experienced to an inexperienced employee within organizational boundaries because of personal motives and interaction between them which facilitates transfer and sharing interns contribute to organization's knowledge capital.

However, the intra-organizational setup, disseminative and absorptive capabilities in the context of knowledge, personal choices and social preference has shown implications on knowledge transfer and sharing (Burt, 1982). Also, the linkage between the sender and receiver knowledge equilibrium in other words sharing and transfer of knowledge among themselves having similar attributes, characteristics and level of understanding are corelated to each other (Chesbrough and Teece, 1996). Intra-organizational and external knowledge hubs, individual and social networks within and outside organizational boundaries are responsible for controlling the acceleration of knowledge transfer and sharing. In similar context technical expertise can be exchanged but on other hand duplication & misunderstanding of knowledge can impact the whole purpose.

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